

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 11

AS AT 19 FEBRUARY 2023

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	10	9	0	81	19	30	111
CASTAWAYS	10	7	2	72	28	30	102
MORPETH A	11	5	3	64	46	33	97
NAT WEST	11	6	2	62	48	33	95
COMETS B	9	5	1	49	41	27	76
OUTCASTS	11	2	0	32	78	33	65
PRO	10	2	2	34	66	30	64
GOOD KARMA	10	0	0	16	84	30	46

Bonus points shown in penultimate column. Ultimate column shows total points from sets won and bonuses

THINGS TO NOTE

- Individual match details can be found on the website at:
https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Active_Season_22-23/Division_One
- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?

COMMENTARY

Week 20

Great interest in the first match of the week – Comets A against Nat West. Could Nat West damage Comets' title chances? The first half fixture was won by Nat West. Could they do it again? The team sheets showed both teams meant business. Nat West brought in Tony Catt and Chris Herbert to join the unbeaten Chris Penrose. Comets had Cain Fagan, Ian Francis and Laikram Persaud. An early blow for Nat West when it emerged Tony Catt was playing injured and not at full capacity. That became clear in the first set as Cain Fagan beat Catt three straight. The second set was also three straight with Penrose continuing his good run with a defeat of Francis. Laikram Persaud completed the first round of sets with a comfortable win over Chris Herbert. Next was the first key set - Fagan against Penrose. Cain takes the first two ends and this looks like the demise of Chris's 100% average. The third end was mighty close but Chris kept in the set with a 12-10 victory. The fourth end was won by the biggest margin in the set – 11-6 – and it was won by Fagan. A bitter blow for Nat West and Penrose's first loss of the season. Catt against Persaud was a one-sided contest. It's hard enough to beat Laikram when you're fully fit but injured you've got no chance. Catt goes down three straight. That put Comets 4-1 in the lead. Chris Herbert had a chance to pull one back against Francis but Ian won their first half duel easily. Chris won two of the first three ends but couldn't keep up momentum losing the next two ends 11-7, 11-7. Next up is Penrose against Persaud. I think these guys have played each other just once before and Laikram won that. Chris wins the first end but Laikram wins the second. The third end went point for point all the way to deuce. Eventually Laikram won it 13-11 and that success proved crucial as Laikram held on to win the fourth and take the set 11-9. A second loss for Chris and a good win for Laikram. To put this perspective, Laikram has played 18 singles this season and he's won 15 of them three straight! This was followed by the best set of the night as Herbert faced Fagan. Last week we had some odd scorelines and this proved to be another. Five ends were involved, two ended at deuce while the other three ended 3, 2, and 4! Huge shifts from one end to the next. When Cain took the fourth end 11-2 there were long odds on a win for Chris yet inexplicably that's what happened as Chris took the final end 11-4! Quite a turnaround! Catt then completed a miserable night with a loss to Francis and the match stood at 7-2 to Comets A. The doubles was a close contest but despite a good effort from Nat West the result went to Comets A 11-9 in the fifth. So, Nat West failed to make a significant dent in Comets A's armour and the title race is looking over.

Morpeth have had a steady run of successes this season without reaching the heights of the 2019-20 season when they were just pipped in the title race. Outcasts have found the season hard going and picked up only a couple of wins though they've only been badly beaten two or three times. One of those was last week when they suffered at the hands of Comets A. Morpeth's team comprised Toan To, Duncan Brown and a rare appearance from Oleg Blyuss. Outcasts' side was Bob Coull, Eddie Roullier and Alan Jones. Things started brightly for Outcasts as Coull beat To surprisingly easily. The next three sets all went Morpeth's way with Brown beating Roullier, Blyuss beating Jones and To beating Roullier. Outcasts then pulled one back with Bob Coull getting the better of Blyuss in four. Another run of three successes for Morpeth followed – each in four ends. That meant the night's two unbeaten players faced each other: Coull against Brown. I think this is a very even contest but head-to-head results have gone Duncan's way on almost every precious occasion. Bob takes the first end but Duncan draws level winning the second end. The third end goes Duncan's way and it's make or break time for Bob. Duncan's dominance is maintained as he wins the fourth end and with it the set. The Brown / To combination then got the better of Roullier and Coull to make the match score 8-2 to Morpeth. A handy maximum for Duncan Brown and his second Player of the Match award. We'll only whisper it as they're playing Nat West next week but Duncan's on a streak of six straight wins!

[PRO v. Castaways. Team captains' comments on this match can be read [here](#). I shall keep my commentary brief therefore.] PRO didn't give Castaways much trouble in the first half, let's see if they can do better this time round. No Ronnie Turner for PRO, replaced by George Buck. Castaways have their regular team out but Johnny Bispham is hampered by an ankle injury. PRO open with John Crawford to face Terry McKee. Terry lost their first half encounter but took the first end here. John came back to win the next two ends, the third by the narrowest of margins. The fourth end went Terry's way and we're into a fifth end. John doesn't have a great record of fifth-end victories but on this occasion, he got out in front and stayed there to win the set 11-5 in the fifth. Good start for PRO! Castaways then strike back with three quick wins. In set five, Crawford proved to be too good for the injured Bispham, winning three straight. Jai Persaud always gives LeMilliere a good game and so it proved again with Jai winning the first two ends and reaching 9-9 in the fourth. That end went Neil's way at 11-9 and after that he never looked back, winning the next two ends with ease, conceding just five points. It is hard to fathom how fortunes can change so rapidly! Two more wins for Castaways and the match score is 6-2 in their favour. The last singles set replayed a rivalry that stretches back to the 1990s or earlier! In recent times Neil LeMilliere has the edge over John Crawford but it's always close. On this occasion, it was John who started the better and led two ends to one. He reached match point in the fourth but Neil held on to win the end 12-10. In the fifth it was John who had the satisfaction of breaking his run of losses to Neil, coming home 11-6! That gave John a well-earned maximum! His contribution was all PRO could muster and Castaways gain a 7-3 win. Unfortunately, it subsequently emerged that Johnny Bispham's ankle injury is serious and might be season-ending. Bad luck for him and Castaways!

The final match this week saw luckless Karma take on Comets B. Both these teams use lots of players but the difference is Comets have settled on a smaller nucleus of regular players while Karma are still changing composition every week. This time it was reserve Wouter Mayeur who was asked to step up and join the first team – the twelfth player appearing this season. So, it's Mayeur, Michael Miller and George Sanders to face Tai Luu, Allam Bhangoo and David Adesanya. Comets have been quietly creeping up the table and are unbeaten in their last four matches. Tai Luu began with a three straight defeat of Mayeur. Michael Miller hit back with an equally brisk win over Allam Bhangoo. The match stands at 1-1. From that moment on everything went Comets' way as they ran off win after win and all three straight. I didn't expect Comets to win so convincingly. David Adesanya was their best player conceding an average of just five points in each of the nine ends he played. A good all round team performance from Comets yields a convincing 9-1 win!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 19/02/2023

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 12 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	17	18	94.4
Penrose	NAT WEST	19	21	90.5
C Fagan	COMETS A	12	14	85.7
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	10	12	83.3
Adesanya	COMETS B	12	15	80.0
McKee	CASTAWAYS	12	15	80.0
S Fagan	COMETS A	18	23	78.3
Johnson	NAT WEST	9	12	75.0
Wong	COMETS A	9	12	75.0
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	22	30	73.3
Miuccio	MORPETH A	10	14	71.4
Francis	COMETS A	14	20	70.0
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	18	27	66.7
Chair	OUTCASTS	10	15	66.7
Luu	COMETS B	10	15	66.7
Alnak	MORPETH A	9	15	60.0
Brown	MORPETH A	17	29	58.6
Crawford	PRO	14	24	58.3
Turner	PRO	14	24	58.3
Herbert	NAT WEST	8	15	53.3
To	MORPETH A	10	20	50.0
Coull	OUTCASTS	9	18	50.0
Alexander	MORPETH A	6	12	50.0
Bhangoo	COMETS B	8	18	44.4
Jones	NAT WEST	9	24	37.5
Miller	GOOD KARMA	4	15	26.7
Jameson	OUTCASTS	3	12	25.0
Muller	NAT WEST	3	12	25.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	3	12	25.0
Persaud	PRO	4	24	16.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	2	15	13.3
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	18	11.1
Jones	OUTCASTS	1	15	6.7
Buck	PRO	1	18	5.6